

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SCCT-02 OPR-02 NIC-01 ARAE-00 DRC-01 /107 W

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P 201350Z SEP 74

FM AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0898

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL CALI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MEDELLIN 0291

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: CO, PINS

SUBJ: CONTINUING UNIVERSITY UPHEAVAL IN MEDELLIN

REF: MEDELLIN 0278

1. THE PAST TEN DAYS HAVE WITNESSED CONTINUING STUDENT AND UNIVERSITY UNREST IN ANTIOQUIA, CULMINATING IN THE DECISION OF THE DIRECTIVE COUNCIL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ANTIOQUIA THE NIGHT OF SEPT 17 TO SHUT DOWN THE UNIVERSITY. THE CRISIS AT THE U OF A HAS DOMINATED STUDENT AND PROFESSOR ATTENTION OVER THIS PERIOD; THAT FACT MAY ACCOUNT IN PART FOR THE SURPRISINGLY MUTED OBSERVATION IN MEDELLIN OF THE SOLIDARITY WITH CHILE WEEK JUST PAST.

2. THE DIRECTIVE COUNCIL, PRESIDED OVER BY RECTOR LUIS FERNANDO DUQUE, RESPONDED TO THE INDEFINITE STRIKE (REFTEL) CALLED BY THE U OF A PROFESSORS ASSOCIATION BY SUSPENDING ALL OF THE UNIVERSITY'S ACADEMIC PROGRAMS INDEFINITELY, BY PROHIBITING ACCESS TO THE UNIVERSITY, BY FIRING OUTRIGHT ELEVEN NON-DEGREE U OF A PROFESSORS, AND BY SUSPENDING 39 OTHER PROFESSORS PENDING THE OUTCOME OF AN HONOR COURT CONVENED TO REVIEW CHARGES AGAINST THE LATTER. MEANWHILE, THE GOVERNOR OF ANTIOQUIA JAIME

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R. ECHAVARRIA, ORDERED TROOPS AND POLICE UNITS TO THE U OF A CAMPUS

TO MAINTAIN ORDER AND TO PREVENT ACCESS TO TEACHERS AND STUDENTS.

3. THE ACTION OF THE DIRECTIVE COUNCIL CAME FOLLOWING THE VISIT LAST WEEKEND OF GOV ECHAVARRIA TO BOGOTA WHERE HE CONFERRED WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ. RECTOR DUQUE HAS DECLARED THAT THE DIRECTIVE COUNCIL'S MEASURES WERE SPECIFICALLY DISCUSSED BY ECHAVARRIA AND LOPEZ AND HAD THE PRESIDENT'S PRIOR APPROVAL. DUQUE SAID BOTH THE PRESIDENT AND THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION ARE GIVING THE GOVERNOR AND UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES FULL FREEDOM OF ACTION IN THE U OF A CRISIS.

4. THE PROFESSORS ASSOCIATION, BARRED FROM THE U OF A CAMPUS, TRANSFERRED ITS HEADQUARTERS TO THE DOWNTOWN AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF LATIN AMERICA. STUDENTS AND PROFESSORS HELD ALL-DAY MEETINGS THERE SEPT 18, INTERRUPTED BY TWO BRIEF STREET DEMONSTRATIONS NEITHER OF WHICH NUMBERED MORE THAN 450-500 PARTICIPANTS; A FEW STORE WINDOWS WERE BROKEN. THREE OTHER MEDELLIN UNIVERSITIES (THE AUTONOMOUS UNIV OF LATIN AMERICA, THE MEDELLIN BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL UNIV AND THE UNIV OF MEDELLIN) HAVE DECLARED 48 HOURS SYMPATHY STRIKES. IT ALSO SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PROFESSORS IN ANTIOQUIA WILL TAKE SOME KIND OF SUPPORTIVE ACTION.

COMMENT: THE FOCUS OF THE CONFRONTATION REMAINS THE QTE TEACHING STATUTE UNQTE. WHILE ALL PARTIES ADMIT THAT SOME CHANGES IN THE STATUTE ARE NECESSARY, THE BASIC ISSUE IS UNIVERSITY CONTROL, AND THE

ADMINISTRATION AND THE MILITANT PROFESSORS ASSOCIATION ARE POLES APART. NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE STATUTE BROKE OFF WHEN THE ASSOCIATION, REPORTED TO REPRESENT SOME 300 OF THE UNIVERSITY'S 900 PROFESSORS, REFUSED TO ATTEND NEGOTIATING SESSIONS THAT INCLUDE THE PARTICIPATION OF REPRESENTATIVES OF A PARALLEL AND MUCH SMALLER PROFESSORS ORGANIZATION KNOWN AS ASDUA, WHICH HOLDS POSITIONS ON THE STATUTE MORE AMENABLE TO THE U OF A ADMINISTRATION. THIS NEGOTIATING IMPASSE LED TO THE PROFESSORS STRIKE AND THE SUBSEQUENT SHUTDOWN OF THE UNIVERSITY. LOCAL OBSERVERS CONSIDER THE CURRENT U OF A CONFRONTATION THE MOST SERIOUS TO HIT THAT TROUBLED INSTITUTION IN RECENT YEARS. COOPER

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